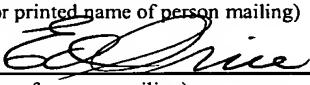


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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

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Sir:

Prior to examining the above-identified U.S. national phase application of International patent application No. PCT/IB2003/04489, having a priority date of October 17, 2002, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

**Amendments to the Claims** begin on page 2 of this paper.

**Remarks/Arguments** begin on page 5 of this paper.